

[MSN Home](#) | [My MSN](#) | [Hotmail](#) | [Search](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Money](#) | [People & Chat](#)
msn
MSNBC News
SO YA THINK YA KNOW EVERYTHING?
MSNBC
HOME

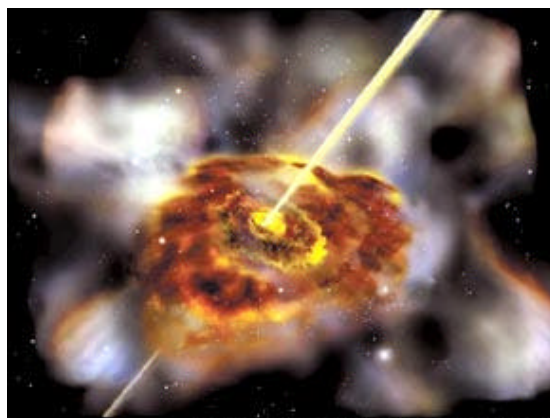
[News](#)
[Business](#)
[Sports](#)
[Tech - Science](#)
[Living](#)
[Travel](#)
[Health](#)
[TV News](#)
[Opinions](#)
[Weather - Local](#)
[Shop@MSNBC](#)
[MSN.com](#)
QwestDex
[online yellow pages](#)
[Find a Local Business](#)
Technology & Science
SPACE NEWS
SPACE
.C O M

Advertisement

[Shopping on MSN](#)

Detailed look at black hole's dinner

An artist's conception of a black hole pulling in surrounding gas and dust. In this image, the black hole is buried in the center of a disk of gas and dust (brown and yellow cloudy area in center). This material whirls around the black hole before plunging in, like water down a drain. This generates intense friction, heating the gas and causing it to shine brightly.



Aureore Simonnet / Sonoma State University

 By Robert Roy Britt
 SPACE.COM

SEATTLE, Jan. 9 — Black holes love to feast. Among their favorite food is gas. Today, astronomers announced they've made the most detailed observations ever of giant clouds of gas very near a colossal black hole.

E-MAIL THIS

COMPLETE STORY

ADVERTISING ON MSNBC
RESOURCE GUIDE

- eDiets Diet Center
- Shop at B&N.com
- Auctions at uBid
- Yellow Pages
- lavalife.com
- Where singles click
- MSN Broadband

SPONSORS
AMERITRADE
shareBUILDER
NetBank
 MEMBER FDIC

TD WATERHOUSE
MSN Shopping:

 Shop for what's **hot**
Space News

- Astronomers see the cosmic frontier
- Space.com: Detailed look at black hole's dinner
- Star kicked out of its stellar family
- Space.com: Planet seeds survive a frying

Technology & Science

- Got questions about cloning?
- Hot new devices at tech show
- Astronomers see the cosmic frontier
- Sardines, anchovies flourish in cycles

MSNBC's Top News

- U.S. says 'smoking gun' not needed
- N. Korea pulls out of nuclear pact
- WashPost: INS registration stirs panic, concern
- U.S. says 'smoking gun' not needed


COMPAQ
Compaq Presario
6410nx Desktop Pc
\$589.99
[HPShopping](#)
[More Desktops](#)
DELL
[hpshopping.com](#)



ON THE BLACK HOLE'S DINNER PLATE was carbon monoxide. Some of it will almost surely be consumed, the researchers say. Scientists have struggled to observe these final stages of consumption, because black holes are far away and because the eating generates a lot of light that drowns out what's happening.

For this reason, the observations were made with a radio telescope.

"We have hints that some of the cold gas clouds may be moving toward the galactic center," said Johannes Staguhn, a radio astronomer at NASA and the Science Systems and Applications corporation.

Meanwhile, the cool gas, arranged in a ring around the center of a distant galaxy, is likely the site of some pretty incredible star formation, Staguhn said.



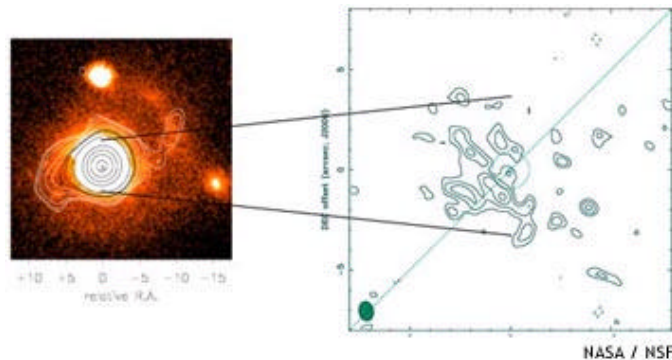
- [Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Quasar](#)
- [Celestial Neighbors Not As Close As They Appear](#)
- [Single Quasar Turns Out To Be Twins](#)

The findings, along with an artist's rendering of what the scene might look like, were released here today at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society

Staguhn and his colleagues studied a highly active galaxy,

called a quasar, that is some 800 million light years away. Quasars shines fiercely. The new observations are a step toward determining if there is a link between star formation and the bright activity of quasars, which is thought to be generated when stuff falls into a supermassive central black hole.

The left is a composite of a Hubble infrared image (orange and white areas) of quasar galaxy QSO 1 Zw 1 overlaid with a contour-line image. White represents the highest intensity infrared light, orange-red represents the lowest. The right image is a more detailed portrayal of the galaxy's center.



The thinking goes like this: While some of the gas in the clouds collapses under its own weight to form stars, a portion of it leaks inward toward the black hole. The immense gravity of the black hole accelerates the gas to nearly the speed of light, superheating it and creating tremendous radiation before most of the gas is swallowed.

The gas clouds orbit about 4,000 light-years from the quasar's center, at a speed of nearly 125 miles every second (200 kps). They contain the mass of more than a billion suns.

The researches also found evidence that the quasar

Advertisement

MSN Shopping:

Add local news and weather to the MSNBC home page.

might be interacting with a neighboring galaxy. Galaxy mergers are thought to fuel star formation, and Staghorn is eager to learn whether the same is true when quasars absorb other galaxies.

The observations were made with the National Science Foundation's Berkeley Illinois Maryland Association (BIMA) radio telescope array at Hat Creek, Calif.

© 2003 Space.com. All rights reserved.

MORE FROM SPACE.COM

INTERNET [Space.com](#)

MORE MSNBC COVERAGE: SPACE NEWS

- STORY** [Astronomers see the cosmic frontier](#)
- STORY** [Space.com: Detailed look at black hole's dinner](#)
- STORY** [Star kicked out of its stellar family](#)
- STORY** [Space.com: Planet seeds survive a frying](#)
- STORY** [Cosmic Log: Lord of the DNA ring](#)
- HOME** [MSNBC Cover Page](#)

MSNBC READERS' TOP 10

Would you recommend this story to other readers?

not at all **1** - **2** - **3** - **4** - **5** - **6** - **7** highly

BACK TO TOP ↑



MSNBC is optimized for
 • **Microsoft Internet Explorer**
 • **Windows Media Player**

• **MSNBC Terms, Conditions and Privacy** © 2003

[Cover](#) | [News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Local News](#) | [Health](#) | [Technology & Science](#) | [Living](#) | [Travel](#)
[TV News](#) | [Opinions](#) | [Weather](#) | [Comics](#)

[InfoCenter](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Search](#) | [Help](#) | [News Tools](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Write Us](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Privacy](#)

MSN - More Useful Everyday

[MSN Home](#) | [My MSN](#) | [Hotmail](#) | [Search](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Money](#) | [People & Chat](#)

©2002 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. [Terms of Use](#) [Advertise](#) [Truste Approved Privacy Statement](#) [GetNetWise](#)